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# Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 71/223, provides an update on the implementation of processes derived from Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. It presents, in accordance with the request in the resolution, an analysis of the unfinished business of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In that context, it addresses: the outcome of the meeting of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 10 to 19 July 2017, with the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" and focusing on sustainable development goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14 as well as sustainable development goal 17, which is discussed every year; the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism including through the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; the strengthening of the science-policy interface and preparations for the *Global Sustainable Development Report* to be published in 2019; the regional dimension of sustainable development; and sustainable consumption and production. Additionally, in accordance with resolution 71/223, the present report should be read in conjunction with the Secretary-General's report on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/72/75-E/2017/56).

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# I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/223.

2. On 25 September 2015, the General Assembly adopted the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

3. As recognized in resolution 71/223, the 2030 Agenda represents a landmark in the mainstreaming into the global development agenda of the legacy of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The concepts and thematic areas covered in these instruments are directly or indirectly encompassed in the 2030 Agenda.

4. The resolution further underlined that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development builds upon elements from the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In the 2030 Agenda, and directly emanating from the outcome document of the Conference, as part of its determinations on the theme of the "institutional framework for sustainable development", the high-level political forum on sustainable development was mandated, under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with "the central role in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level".

5. Accordingly, the present report presents an update on: the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 10 to 19 July 2017, the second since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda; the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism; the strengthening of the science-policy interface and an update on the preparation of the *Global Sustainable Development Report*; and the regional dimension of sustainable development. The report also refers to sustainable consumption and production and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

6. Additionally, in accordance with resolution 71/223, the report provides analysis of the unfinished business of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

7. The present report should be read in conjunction with other reports on sustainable development submitted to the General Assembly, in particular the report on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/72/75-E/2017/56), which is mandated by resolution 71/223.

# II. Follow-up and review

## A. Meeting of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council

8. The high-level political forum on sustainable development held its second meeting since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda from 10 to 19 July 2017, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The meeting included a three-day ministerial segment.

9. In preparation for the meeting, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums were invited to share relevant input and their deliberations with regard to addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and targets from the perspective of "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". A number of them also addressed the Goals under discussion (1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17). Thirty-eight submissions were received from the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council, other intergovernmental bodies and multi stakeholder platforms. A synthesis of these voluntary submissions has been prepared (see E/HLPF/2017/3). Submissions were also received from major groups and other stakeholders on their contribution to implementation (see E/HLPF/2017/2).

10. The high-level political forum on sustainable development discussed all six Sustainable Development Goals mandated for the 2017 high-level political forum session, together with Sustainable Development Goal 17, which is discussed each year. All sessions on individual goals were approached from the perspective of interlinkages with other goals and from all three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental. The guidance and recommendations given, including through the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level political forum, followed the same pattern of interlinkages, to draw attention to the coherence and coordination necessary at all levels for the advancement of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals.

11. The critical role of the high-level political forum on sustainable development as the global platform for follow-up and review was confirmed, as it had firmly established itself as a space for considering challenges and structural barriers that require coordinated action at the global level. The facilitative momentum of the high-level political forum also enhanced national efforts towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

12. The theme of the high-level political forum, "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world", was discussed through "addressing multi-dimensions of poverty and inequalities". It was discussed also from a multi-stakeholder perspective and the perspective of countries in special situations as well as middle-income countries. The messages included:

(a) Many dimensions of poverty and deprivation must be addressed in order to eradicate poverty worldwide;

(b) Deprivation in the areas of health care, education, economic opportunity, gender empowerment, housing and natural resource management, among others, has a direct correlation to poverty;

(c) High-quality, disaggregated data was seen as central to support decision-making and efforts to eradicate poverty by addressing interlocking negative trends such as climate change, the destruction of natural resources that provide ecosystem services, pollution and other environmental stressors that can undermine progress;

(d) The Multidimensional Poverty Index was noted as a useful tool for the analysis of domestic poverty conditions, complementing traditional, income-based measures;

(e) National mainstreaming of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Sustainable Development Goals, inclusive of mid-term frameworks and budgets, is critical in order to foster national ownership of the 2030 Agenda and ensure positive synergies. Building capacity across all sectors is necessary, as is public information-sharing to enhance transparency and accountability and to build trust;

(f) Stakeholder engagement and effective partnerships of all kinds are key to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for small island developing States;

(g) Development finance for countries in special situations needs to be more reliable, sourced from multiple stakeholders and targeted towards the specific needs of different countries;

(h) Unemployment remains the greatest challenge for the least developed countries, which means that ensuring sustained, greener economic growth remains a priority;

(i) Landlockedness poses particular challenges that should be addressed through better access to markets and to new, context-specific technologies, while post-conflict countries expressed specific development needs that often arise from fragmentation of development planning;

(j) Middle-income countries suggested that their classification include an assessment that goes beyond income per capita assessment and takes into account life expectancy, institutional development, people living in poverty, vulnerable groups, unemployment and technological progress, among other indicators.

13. During the session dedicated to assessing "where we are at year two", the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs presented the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2017/66), an overview of global progress towards the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda, on the basis of a selection of indicators for which data were available as at April 2017. For most indicators presented in the report, values represent global, regional and subregional aggregates and are calculated from data from national statistical systems, compiled by international agencies, on the basis of their respective mandates and specialized expertise.

14. Other discussions were held on issues relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including: new ideas, insights and solutions on the science-policy interface; investing in and financing for the Sustainable Development Goals; making the 2030 Agenda deliver for small island developing States, building on the SAMOA Pathway; countries in special situations; and multi stakeholder engagement for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An interactive dialogue on regional experiences was held with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions and representatives of other regional organizations.

15. The following main messages derived from the discussions on the six Sustainable Development Goals (on poverty, hunger, health, gender, infrastructure and industrialization and oceans) as well as Sustainable Development Goal 17:[1]

(a) Poverty is not defined by monetary income alone — the many dimensions of poverty and deprivation must be considered and addressed in order eradicate poverty worldwide. Equity is therefore seen as a fundamental principle for all efforts;

(b) Social inclusion and engagement of all relevant stakeholders is an important precondition for poverty eradication;

(c) Poverty measurements and statistics need to be socially relevant. So far, many poor countries have relied mainly on economic growth for their poverty reduction efforts, but in order to tackle relative poverty, measuring growth alone will not suffice;

[1] For more information, see the President's summary of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development. Available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf.

(d) High-quality, disaggregated data is central to any successful efforts to eradicate poverty;

(e) Multidimensional poverty is influenced by several interlocking negative trends such as climate change, the destruction of natural resources that provide ecosystem services, pollution and other environmental stressors that can undermine anti-poverty efforts;

(f) Urgent action is required to respond to the severe food insecurity and malnutrition crises, famine and threat of famine that we are seeing today and to reduce the likelihood of their recurrence in the near future;

(g) Legal frameworks must be strengthened to promote a rights-based approach, including the right to food and secure equitable tenure rights over land, water and fisheries resources;

(h) Women's empowerment and gender equality are key to achieving food security and sustainable agriculture. If women can have equal access to land, productive assets and decision-making, then agricultural yields would rise while hunger and malnutrition would be reduced;

(i) Agricultural transformation must become more knowledge-intensive to achieve income and productivity targets for small and family farmers;

(j) Health solutions will need to connect with efforts in education, nutrition, empowerment of women and girls, climate change and air pollution and financial mechanisms such as taxation;

(k) Equity is a fundamental principle that must be intentionally and proactively pursued — universal health coverage is an essential means for achieving equity in health care and for leaving no one behind;

(l) Adequate funding for health, including research and innovation, community-based interventions, health infrastructure and social safety nets is needed by government and stakeholders including the private sector;

(m) Achieving gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but a prerequisite for prosperous societies and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda as a whole;

(n) While remarkable efforts have been made in setting laws and policies, two years is still early to map out the full progress on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, as systemic and structural changes in this area take time and still have a long way to go;

(o) Robust and well-planned infrastructure underpins all economic growth and is a prerequisite for access to basic services and for boosting industrialization. Investment in "social infrastructure" is needed in order that benefits from industrialization can be shared by all;

(p) Resilient, green infrastructure safeguards citizens and can simultaneously provide solutions for both mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;

(q) Investments and policy planning need to be industry-specific, building on the strengths and strong sectors of each country and need to be based on best technology and innovation;

(r) The digital economy has created unprecedented opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises to access new markets through electronic platforms, and new rules for e-commerce could establish an internationally level playing field for these actors to thrive;

(s) The high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (Ocean Conference), held in June

2017 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and hosted by Fiji and Sweden, created universal momentum to forge new partnerships to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14;

(t) The ocean faces many challenges, from marine pollution to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, but it also provides a number of opportunities especially to those countries, in particular small island developing States, that rely on oceans for their livelihood;

(u) Over the past two years, the international community has seen notable progress in the implementation of the Addis Abba Action Agenda, which provides the comprehensive financing framework for the Sustainable Development Goals;

(v) Investing in the Sustainable Development Goals is not just about finance, but also about institutional change and better governance in support of a coherent framework for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(w) Significant gaps remain and the current global environment presents numerous challenges to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. To overcome these challenges, the international community must act with a sense of urgency by fully implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda at all levels;

(x) It is necessary to focus on systemic economic development rather than piecemeal projects and align financing mechanisms with the systemic model. Further efforts are needed to make a strong business case for investing in the Sustainable Development Goals to mobilize private capital for financing sustainable development and take advantage of the increased interest of the private sector in the 2030 Agenda;

(y) There is a need further exploring new approaches to channel finance into sustainable development. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals requires the full participation of all stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society. At the same time, there is a need for increased transparency and public scrutiny, in particular when it comes to public-private partnerships. In this context, the United Nations is the right place to explore guidelines to ensure that interactions with the private sector share risks and rewards fairly, include clear accountability mechanisms and meet social and environmental standards.

16. During the ministerial segment of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, 43 countries[2] presented voluntary national reviews, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 67/290, 70/1 and 70/299. The main messages provided by the countries presenting voluntary national reviews are contained in a note by the Secretariat (E/HLPF/2017/6). The Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided support for the preparation of these reviews, under the leadership and guidance of the President of the Economic and Social Council through workshops (global and regional) that allowed for the exchange of ideas, practices and information and enabled collective reflection on how to present voluntary national reviews to the high-level political forum, in the context of advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level.

17. The main issues raised during the voluntary national reviews were the following:

[2] Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Monaco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

(a) National preparations were considered extensive and impactful, a welcome tool for keeping up the momentum on implementation efforts, in part due to strong commitment from the highest levels of government;

(b) There is a need to nationalize and localize the 2030 Agenda, to create true ownership of the Agenda, and for that a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is necessary. Inclusiveness and engagement of all stakeholders in the process were seen as essential;

(c) Policymaking for the Sustainable Development Goals needs to become more effective, for instance through active political commitment and engagement by community and traditional leaders, opinion leaders, the media and political leaders to address the social, economic and environmental challenges faced by the countries;

(d) Identifying interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals and within Goals at the target level is critical and should translate into the policymaking, budgeting and institutional structures and processes at the national and subnational levels. This principle should also guide multilateral cooperation to ensure effective coordination and policy coherence;

(e) Countries recognized the essential role of data for monitoring and review at the national level and that is why national statistics offices are already being tasked with monitoring progress of the Sustainable Development Goals and the mapping of all Goal indicators, including the development of baseline reports. However, capacity assessments and measures to close capacity gaps still need to be undertaken;

(f) Countries are working on developing data literacy, capacity to disaggregate traditional indicators and develop non-traditional ones. There is a need to work towards integrating diverse monitoring and evaluation structures into a single national system, which will reduce parallel structures for monitoring and overlaps in data collection.

18. Additionally, during the ministerial segment, a session was held with chairs of regional forums for the preparation of the high-level political forum on sustainable development on synergies and coherence between regional and global levels on the basis of main messages from regional forums; and daily sessions of the general debate were held on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

19. The high-level political forum also included over a hundred side-events, a partnership exchange event for multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge and expertise to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, SDG Learning, a business forum on the Goals and a learning and practice programme related to the Goals and a forum of chief sustainability officers.

20. The high-level political forum on sustainable development closed with the adoption of a ministerial declaration (E/2017/L.29-E/HLPF/2017/L.2).

## B. Technology Facilitation Mechanism — the way forward

21. In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Heads of State and Government decided to establish a Technology Facilitation Mechanism, based on multi-stakeholder collaboration among Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders. The Mechanism was launched by Heads of State and Government in the 2030 Agenda in September 2015 and has three components: (a) the United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) the

collaborative annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) an online platform to serve as a gateway for information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes within and beyond the United Nations system.

22. The membership of the inter-agency task team has increased to 35 active members, which contributed the time of more than 80 staff members to the joint endeavour. The inter-agency task team has worked closely with the Group of 10 high-level representatives of civil society, the private sector and the scientific community in support of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism ("10-Member Group"). This includes joint meetings and working-level initiatives on key issues. Several joint Mechanism activities are being planned for the coming months.

23. The inter-agency task team and the 10-Member Group held the second multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation in New York on 15 and 16 May 2017. The forum attracted more than 800 participants, representing a cross-section of scientists, innovators, technology specialists, entrepreneurs, policymakers and civil society representatives. An exhibition hub featured 12 innovators from across the world, selected through a competitive process.

24. The forum explored policies and actions for advancing science, technology and innovation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It welcomed the progress of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism in facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships and proposed recommendations for action which are detailed in the Co-Chairs' Summary of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (E/HLPF/2017/4). They include the following: (a) in view of technological solutions ("low-tech" and "high-tech") with transformative impact on the Goals, scientists and innovators need to engage with the realities of local communities, in order to pay more attention to meeting needs through existing low-cost technologies; (b) attention should be paid to scaling up smart investment by Governments, the private sector and other partners, including for building productive and human capacity for science, technology and innovation to unlock the creative potential of all; (c) flexible, participatory science, technology and innovation roadmaps at national and global levels are essential to prioritize actions and promote cross-sectoral collaborations for the Goals, which need to include "deep dives" for each Goal; (d) there are positive and negative impacts from the disruptive effects on societies of new technologies, such as nanotechnology, automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, gene editing, big data and 3D printing, and a good understanding of the possible consequences of decisions is essential; (e) while a common understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals has emerged in recent years, there is a need for collaborative work, including by the Mechanism, to safeguard the voice of science in support of the policy discourse, including through open science, universal access and sharing. This is important as science is the ultimate renewable and cumulative resource; (f) there is a need to increase investment in science, technology and innovation, build science, technology and innovation capacity and respective communities around the world in a sustainable manner; (g) There is a need for support for full operationalization of the Mechanism as a catalyst for multi-stakeholder partnerships; (h) There is a need to further explore new methods and engagement structures to incentivize private sector actors to channel their technology- and innovation-related initiatives and efforts into the United Nations science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals process.

25. The independent assessment of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism online platform was completed, as mandated by the 2030 Agenda. Following an open call, independent experts from the Institute of Science and Development of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, China; the Overseas Development Institute, United Kingdom; and of Det Norske Veritas (DNV GL), the Netherlands, prepared the assessment.

The report is available on the Sustainable Development Goals website[3] for comments and expressions of interest to contribute to the development and maintenance of the platform. The 10-Member Group examined the report and found it a useful basis for further discussion and action. Joint work by the inter-agency task team and the 10-Member Group has now begun on the actual development of the Mechanism platform.

26. The inter-agency task team has also begun cooperation on a joint capacity-building pilot project initiated by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Furthermore, the inter-agency task team has begun exploring the impacts of exponential technological change, automation technologies and artificial intelligence on the Sustainable Development Goals — a process which was kick-started by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) through an expert group meeting in Mexico in December 2016 and further explored in dedicated sessions in 2017 at the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, and by the International Telecommunication Union AI for Good Global Summit.

## C. Strengthening the science-policy interface and the *Global Sustainable Development Report*

27. At the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development the need was emphasized to continue strengthening the science-policy interface to support evidence-based policies for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A scientific understanding of the interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals and of the potential impacts of new and emerging issues is critical in order to achieve the Goals. The discussions at the high-level political forum highlighted the need for new and innovative approaches to mobilize and motivate the scientific community to find solutions for pressing development challenges. The forum noted that a successful science-policy interface needs to be inclusive. It needs to take in natural and social sciences, engage beyond academia, consider traditional and indigenous knowledge, include a wider range of stakeholders, be executed as dialogues and promote partnerships at all levels and among developed and developing countries.

28. The discussions at the 2017 high-level political forum highlighted policies and actions for advancing the science, technology and innovation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The discussions emphasized that there are challenges and opportunities for technological solutions for the Goals. There is a need to pay more attention to meeting needs through existing low-cost technologies and to remove barriers to scaling up proven solutions. These require scientists and innovators to engage with the realities of local communities and policymakers to provide enabling conditions. Flexible and participatory science, technology and innovation roadmaps for the Goals, at the national and global levels, could play a supporting role in this regard. The discussions also emphasized that it is critical to understand the potential positive and negative impacts of new technologies, such as nanotechnology, automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, gene editing, big data and 3D printing, to harness these technologies for sustainable development.

29. The discussions also emphasized the importance of the *Global Sustainable Development Report* to strengthening the science-policy interface. In the ministerial declaration of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development

[3] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/tfm.

(E/HLS/2016/1), the Member States decided that the *Report* would provide guidance on the state of global sustainable development from a scientific perspective, which will help address the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, provide lessons learned, while focusing on challenges, address new and emerging issues and highlight emerging trends and actions. It was further decided that the Report would be prepared once every four years for the meetings of the political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly and that the report would be drafted by an independent group of scientists supported by a task team, co-chaired by one representative each of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Bank, with the logistical support of the United Nations Secretariat. In December 2016, after an extensive consultation process with Member States and relevant United Nations organizations, the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, appointed a group of scientists[4] as members of that independent group.

30. The independent group of scientists and the United Nations task team have convened two meetings for the preparation of the 2019 *Global Sustainable Development Report*. At the first meeting, held in New York from 21 to 23 February 2017, the activities to ensure the scientific credibility, legitimacy and relevance of the 2019 *Report* were identified. Also agreed upon was the establishment of working groups to initiate the conceptualization of the building blocks of the report. At the second meeting, held at Glen Cove, United States of America, from 14 to 19 July 2017, the conceptualization and structuring of the report was advanced and a workplan prepared for engaging with scientific communities and other stakeholders. The independent group of scientists is expected to involve scientists from all

[4] Wolfgang Lutz (Austria), Founding Director of the Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital, Program Director of the World Population Program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and Director of the Vienna Institute of Demography of the Austrian Academy of Sciences; Jean-Pascal van Ypersele (Belgium), Co-Director of the Interdisciplinary Master Programme in Science and Management of the Environment, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium; Parfait Ekoundou-Enyegue (Cameroon), Professor and Department Chair of Development Sociology, Cornell University, New York; Katherine Richardson (Denmark), Professor of Biological Oceanography, Leader of the Sustainability Science Center at the University of Copenhagen and leader of the macroecology and oceanography theme at the Center for Macroecology, Evolution and Climate; Eeva Furman (Finland), Director of the Environmental Policy Centre at the Finnish Environment Institute SYKE and Chair of the Finnish National Expert Panel on Sustainable Development; Jean-Paul Moatti (France), Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the French Research Institute for Development (IRD); Ernest Foli (Ghana), Principal Research Scientist at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research Forestry Research Institute of Ghana; Endah Murniningtyas (Indonesia), former Deputy Minister for National Resources and Environment at the Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency of Indonesia; David Smith (Jamaica), Coordinator of the Institute for Sustainable Development at the University of the West Indies, Coordinator of the University Consortium for Small Island States and the Caribbean Chair for the Sustainable Development Solutions Network; Muhammad Saidam (Jordan), Director of the Environment Monitoring and Research Central Unit in the Royal Scientific Society in Jordan; Jurgis Staniskis (Lithuania), full member of the Lithuanian Academy of Science, Professor at Kaunas University of Technology and Director of the Institute of Environmental Engineering; Gonzalo Hernández Licona (Mexico), Executive Secretary of the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy; Eun Mee Kim (Republic of Korea), Professor and Dean at the Graduate School of International Studies and Director of the Institute for Development and Human Security at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Republic of Korea; Peter Messerli (Switzerland), Director and Professor for Sustainable Development, Centre for Development and Environment, Institute of Geography, University of Bern, and Co-chair of Future Earth's Global Land Programme; and Amanda Glassman (United States), Chief Operating Officer and senior fellow at the Center for Global Development, Washington, D.C.

disciplines, in different languages, with a special effort to reach out to scientists from developing countries. They will also connect with other stakeholders.

## D. Regional dimension of sustainable development

31. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ("The future we want"), General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda all acknowledge the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development, including follow-up and review at the regional level, alongside the national and global levels.

32. Since the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and in response to the mandate of the General Assembly calling on the regional commissions to contribute to the work of the high-level political forum, including through regional meetings (resolution 67/290), States Members of the regional commissions have established regional forums for sustainable development: the fourth session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, was held in Bangkok in March 2017; the Economic Commission for Europe held its second regional forum on sustainable development in Geneva in April 2017; the fourth session of the Arab Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, was held in Rabat in May 2017; the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic Commission for Africa and other bodies, was held in Addis Ababa in May 2017; and the first Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, organized by ECLAC, met in Mexico City in May 2017.

33. Reports of the regional forums on sustainable development and regional preparatory meetings to the high-level political forum are contained in a note by the Secretariat (E/HLPF/2017/1, Adds. 1-5). Regional efforts and perspectives on supporting implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and on enhancing support for its implementation are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2017/15).

34. In the sessions on the implementation at the regional and subregional levels and main messages delivered by the ministerial chairs of the regional forums on sustainable development held during the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, it was stressed that regional and subregional organizations and initiatives provide important platforms for addressing regional priorities and challenges, mobilizing collective action and addressing transboundary issues. They are critical for ensuring the coherence and integration of the 2030 Agenda with regional agendas and visions, for integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans and for strengthening the capacity of Governments to implement the Agenda. Building capacity with regard to data, in particular data disaggregation, is an area where regional organizations can contribute, and are already doing so. Such capacity-building is necessary to monitor the imperative of leaving no one behind. Regional forums on sustainable development will be a key part of the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, establishing a link between national and global processes.

35. The messages from these regional forums emphasized in particular that governance and national ownership in consultation with all stakeholders is critical and that transformational change will require additional restructuring of policies in order to recognize social justice and align it with finance and development. In

particular, means of implementation including official development assistance, climate finance and South-South cooperation are important. It was specifically mentioned that eliminating hunger and ensuring food security requires addressing productivity, buying power and production together and understanding the root causes of food insecurity. Adapting the Sustainable Development Goals to local contexts, inventorying legal frameworks and strategies and integrating the Goals through parliaments; cross-border agreements; and the collection and disaggregation of data by strengthening the role of stakeholders and the United Nations system were also emphasized.

## E. Sustainable consumption and production and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production

36. Sustainable consumption and production is a cross-cutting goal that goes beyond Sustainable Development Goal 12 and clearly illustrates the interconnectedness of the Sustainable Development Goals. Many other Goal targets involve some aspect of sustainable consumption and production, namely, producing goods and providing services that allow for economic growth and development while maintaining natural resources for future generations. It is also an issue which clearly illustrates the interlinkages between the 2030 Agenda and other intergovernmental agreements, such as the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Achieving both agendas will require coherent and complementary approaches to implementation. The nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement already address several Goals, and there is significant correlation at the target level. Effective coordination in the design and implementation of nationally determined contributions and Goals will accelerate the advancement of both agendas and optimize results.

37. At the 2017 high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, sustainable consumption and production was addressed with respect to the adverse impacts of climate change on the ocean. Increased greenhouse gas emissions are causing more carbon dioxide to be absorbed by the oceans from the atmosphere, resulting in oceans that are 30 per cent more acidic than before the industrial revolution. Acidification is detrimental to marine ecosystems and makes the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans an even greater challenge. Maintaining the health and productivity of the ocean, as the world's most important provider of food and nutrition, is critical. In this regard, the Paris Agreement plays a crucial role in reversing ocean decline by establishing nationally determined contributions to facilitate the curbing of global greenhouse gas emissions.

38. Sustainable consumption and production reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 12 and other targets decouples economic growth and improved standard of living from greenhouse gas emissions. This is especially important in rapidly urbanizing cities since they contribute most of the greenhouse gas emissions globally. Cities today occupy approximately only 2 per cent of total land but contribute 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Achieving a low-carbon future (Sustainable Development Goal 13) requires a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energies. In addition, various sectors, including transportation, infrastructure and industry, should strengthen and uphold energy efficiency standards, improve operating performance and reduce greenhouse gases in the production of goods and services. Sustainable Development Goal 12, among others, will be reviewed in the 2018 high-level political forum under the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

39. The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the Habitat III Conference, generates an opportunity to envision the world's urban future with sustainable consumption and production as a leading driver. Implementing the New Urban Agenda will be a key tool for national, subnational and local governments and all relevant stakeholders to achieve sustainable urban development.

40. At the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, sustainable consumption and production was considered to be a critical Sustainable Development Goal uniting many Goal targets. The achievement of 49 targets spread across 13 Goals depends on a shift towards sustainable consumption and production. However, the achievement of greater resource efficiency requires coherence and coordination across various levels of government and government departments. Sustainable Development Goal coordination must take place at the centre of government, with political commitment and leadership at the highest level. Only then can resilient local, national and global economies be achieved and all relevant agendas, such as the Paris Agreement and New Urban Agenda, successfully realized.

## F. Partnership and voluntary commitments and engagement of stakeholders

41. It has been widely recognized that implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved by Governments alone. This is underlined in the preamble to the 2030 Agenda itself, in which it is stated that all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan (see General Assembly resolution 70/1). In addition, one of the 5 Ps is "partnership", whereby the means required to implement the 2030 Agenda are mobilized with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people. The importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships is specifically underscored in Sustainable Development Goal 17 as a means to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Goals.

42. The effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships, while dependent on many factors, will increasingly be tied to their ability to manage and share knowledge and expertise about the issues, processes and solutions that they are promoting. The universality of the Sustainable Development Goals will require, inter alia, that the knowledge and expertise managed and possessed by multi-stakeholder partnerships need to be shared as widely as possible for it to reach beyond immediate constituencies and communities and to have an impact on a global scale. Therefore, in support of the 2030 Agenda and implementation of the Goals, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs maintains the online platform for the partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals,[5] which is aimed at providing global engagement for multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments from all stakeholders. At the time of writing, the platform contains links to over 3,500 partnerships and other initiatives.

43. In response to Member States stressing the need to develop ways to improve transparency, accountability and the sharing of experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships and on the review and monitoring of these partnerships, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Global Compact and the United Nations Office for Partnerships have developed a framework for partnership data for the Sustainable Development Goals[6] in an effort to harmonize the way in which information on voluntary commitments and partnerships is published on websites and associated knowledge products. By providing a unified

[5] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/register.

[6] For more information, see https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/pd4sdgs.

framework for how information is published, the framework aims to bring greater transparency, coherence, impact and comparability with regard to the work carried out by multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary initiatives in their support of the Goals.

44. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs also provides support to the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework[7] as a direct follow-up to the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which was held from 1 to 4 September 2014 in Apia, under the overarching theme "The sustainable development of Small Island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships", and at which approximately 300 small island developing States partnerships were announced.

45. In support of Goal 17 and the overall follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Partnerships, holds an annual Partnership Exchange special event on the margins of the high-level political forum on sustainable development to provide a forum for sharing knowledge and expertise among multi-stakeholder partnerships and stakeholders. The Partnership Exchange special event is focused on reviewing partnerships and voluntary commitments clustered around the set of Sustainable Development Goals reviewed at the high-level political forum each year. In 2017, the Partnership Exchange special event was focused on the Goals that were under review at the 2017 high-level political forum and showed how multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments addressed challenges and needs encountered by countries taking part in the voluntary national reviews, by sharing their expertise and lessons learned.

46. To increase transparency and accountability, registered partnerships are requested to report annually on their progress and their reports are reflected in the Partnership report that is issued annually.[8]

47. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has, in collaboration with partners, established a registry of voluntary commitments gathered around the Ocean Conference, held from 5 to 9 June 2017 at United Nations Headquarters, with the attendance of Heads of State and Government, other high-level representatives from Governments, the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations, as well as the full participation of civil society, the scientific community, the business sector and other relevant stakeholders.

## III. Unfinished business of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

48. The General Assembly, in its resolution 71/223, requested the Secretary-General to include in his report analysis of the unfinished business of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of

[7] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/partnerships/sidspartnershipframework. For more information, see the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/72/214).

[8] The 2016 Partnership report is available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2329Partnership%20Report%202016%20web.pdf. The following report will be issued in the last quarter of 2017.

the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

49. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), adopted in 2015, is universal: all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement the Agenda, which represents a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. The Agenda emerged from the realization that humanity had not progressed on the road to sustainability as far as was hoped in 1992 or in 2012 at the second Rio conference.

50. We can celebrate some notable successes, in particular the fact that hundreds of millions of people have been lifted from poverty during the last two decades. Yet, many of the global problems we are facing today are more acute or larger in scale than they were even five years ago.

51. The Agenda thus builds on previous agreements and frameworks, notably the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, wherein, respectively, the principles of sustainable development goals were defined and the high-level forum on sustainable development established, with the aim of following up and reviewing the Goals.

52. The study of the unfinished business of Agenda 21, whose full content is available on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform[9] is a comparison primarily between the Agenda 21 and the 2030 Agenda, but also with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex). It is evident in the comparative study that Agenda 21 is a very comprehensive document, but which reflects the realities of the 1990s. New economic powers have emerged, while the interdependence of national economies has grown. We have become increasingly dependent on growing energy consumption and international trade. The importance of the private sector in influencing sustainability outcomes globally has grown. It was felt that a new compact was needed to adjust to a globalized world and global threats that could be addressed only through common action and partnership. For this reason, the Heads of State and Government adopted the 2030 Agenda to address the increasingly globalized challenges and mounting inequities.

53. The 2030 Agenda is all-encompassing, as it builds on the five Ps (people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership), interlinking the Sustainable Development Goals, thus ensuring realization of the full Agenda in order to make globalization fair and benefiting all and making lives better for all, including the most vulnerable, and leaving no one behind. This aspect addressed the realities that have emerged since the adoption of Agenda 21 and subsequent agreements.

54. The 2030 Agenda is undoubtedly a more comprehensive framework, as it is universal and encompasses the full range of issues important for humanity. It builds on the previous sustainable development agreements, which still have much to offer in terms of policy guidance and commitments to action. Notably, Agenda 21 remains a very comprehensive document, with detailed guidance in a number of areas, in particular economic, trade and environmental, that can be of value in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

[9] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/resources/sdissuesbriefs.

# IV. Conclusions and recommendations

55. Two years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, there is evidence of firm commitment at all levels and of engagement from multiple stakeholders for its implementation. The adoption and initial stages of implementation of the 2030 Agenda itself are major steps towards the ambitions expressed in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, setting the stage for inclusive, sustainable development. However, there is equal evidence of multiple and significant challenges ahead. The role of the United Nations system will be critical to help countries overcome these challenges. The experience gained from the 2017 high-level political forum will be invaluable in the development of the agenda of subsequent sessions and in ensuring the effectiveness of the contribution of the political forum to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

56. In this context, the General Assembly may consider, at its seventy-second session:

(a) Inviting Member States and other stakeholders to continue to fully engage in support of the work of the high-level political forum in order to consolidate its central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level;

(b) Inviting the President of the Economic and Social Council to consider, with support from the United Nations system, means of ensuring that national and regional preparatory processes to the high-level political forum, as well as relevant international processes, are adequately reflected at the meetings of the forum, so as to make full use of those processes for the benefit of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to enhance policy coordination and coherence;

(c) Inviting Member States and entities of the United Nations system to continue to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in preparatory processes for the high-level political forum and voluntary national reviews;

(d) Inviting the Secretary-General to revise his proposal for voluntary common reporting guidelines for voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum taking into account the experience of the voluntary national reviews in the 2016 and 2017 high-level political forums on sustainable development;

(e) Calling on the United Nations system to continue to support Member States that request assistance in the preparation of voluntary national reviews;

(f) Encouraging Member States that submitted voluntary national reviews in 2016 and 2017 to share their experiences in support of the countries volunteering to submit reviews in future years, including in a regional setting;

(g) Encouraging the scientific community to contribute to the *Global Sustainable Development Report* and to submit voluntary science-based inputs focusing on the annual theme of the high-level political forum;

(h) Encouraging Member States to support the production of the *Global Sustainable Development Report*, including through voluntary contributions;

(i) Inviting all United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates, to consider the theme and set of goals of the 2018 high-level political forum in their work in order to enhance coherence and ensure that full use is made of the potential of the United Nations system to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(j) Inviting the General Assembly and the high-level political forum on sustainable development to address unfinished business of the previous agreements on sustainable development.